



CALORIES *on the Menu*

Beginning in December 2015, restaurant menus will have a new look. Along with price and description, you'll now see calories listed on menus at restaurants, coffee shops, movie theaters and bakeries, among others.



Why put calories on menus?

Most of us eat about a third of our meals away from home. With that in mind, legislation was passed as part of the Affordable Care Act requiring calorie posting on restaurant menus. The goal of the legislation was to make it easier for us to make informed choices about what and how much we eat while we are out.



Where you will and won't see calories:

The final rules about which foods in which restaurants will need to display calorie information were released by the FDA recently. In general, we can expect to see calories on foods and drinks that are served regularly at 20 or more locations under the same brand. This includes just about anywhere that serves food ready to eat, such as movie theaters, sports stadiums, coffee shops, and of course restaurants. Chefs' specials, seasonal dishes or items offered only for a limited time, however, will not be required to have calories listed. Independent restaurants with one or only a few locations and those that move from place to place (trains, planes, food trucks) will not be required to post calories for any of their menu items.



How to use calories on a menu:

Understanding how many calories we take in compared to how many we burn can be valuable in maintaining a healthy weight and active lifestyle. If your day will be very physically active, for example, you will need more calories to keep your energy levels where you need them. On the other hand, if you are going to be sitting most of the day or are trying to lose weight, you will want to eat fewer calories. Comparing calorie levels for foods and drinks can help you make choices that most closely match your needs.



REFERENCES:

1. FDA Menu and Vending Machines Labeling Requirements. <http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackaging/Labeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm217762.htm>

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